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REMINISCENCES OF THE MINOR STAGE.

BY AN OLD STAGER.

PART I.

SINCE the days of the early mysteries and moralities down to our own time, the attractiveness of all matters appertaining to the stage and its rotaries has become proverbial. My reminiscences in matters theatrical carry me back fifty years, yet I can recall with vividness my early emotions, my close identification with the *dramatis personæ*, their joys and sorrows. But although keenly alive to all tender feeling, I never remember to have been afflicted by terror, or even fear; yet was there a certain complex passion arising out of these which would occasionally result in a sensation of profound awe, in such scenes as the Ghost in *Hamlet*, the murder in *Macbeth*, or the death of Virginia.

In the days of which I speak, tragedy with a 'star' in the chief part, was a luxury not to be indulged in every day; hence we were fain to content ourselves with ordinary fare—melodrama and farce. This was by no means a hardship. The food was melodrama pure and simple, laughter and tears closely allied, a combination dear to the adolescent heart. I do not hesitate to affirm that the ecstasy experienced by a Columbus or a Vasco da Gama in the discovery of a new continent, is only to be equalled by the felicitous delight of a first night at the play! Doubtless, many of my elder readers can revert to this very memorable event in their lives, and corroborate me. In my own case, a half-holiday from school was held to be necessary, in order that a preparatory admonition as to behaviour might be administered while being inducted into my theatre-going gear; my usual ready appetite became absorbed in the novelty of the whole thing, and utterly forsook me at the early tea. But for this deprivation I was compensated later on.

In these early days, the doors of the theatre were opened at half-past five or six o'clock, the curtain rising at half-past six; and as every

lessee competed to give full value for the admission fee, the time of closing was rendered problematical. To lose any part of the entertainment, was of course out of the question; the forecasting housewife therefore provided herself with a plentiful supply of eatables, to satisfy the cravings of nature; and as 'apples, oranges, and ginger-beer' were an institution, there was no lack of provender for either body or mind.

I suppose that every boy has had his hero, and duly given him his boyish worship. Mine were numberless. Some of them, it is true, had shuffled off this mortal coil hundreds of years ago, and become immortal; but the larger proportion were of my own creating; genuine to the core, without flaw or speck. In like manner, my heroines were all angels; and if our heroes were immaculate, our villains were of the most disreputable type, most emphatically-pronounced rascals.

Our low comedian was a comic man, albeit gifted by Dame Nature with the saddest countenance ever beheld: I never saw upon his face the remotest approach to a smile, and yet withal, his quips and cranks were provocative of incessant merriment. His fate and his fortunes were cast in unpleasant places: his perplexities were simply delightful, and in his direst misfortunes we vouchsafed him no sympathy. Always in difficulties, his life seemed a burden to him; and but for the tender feeling existing between himself and the pert *soubrette*, I think he would have succumbed. Of course he married her in the end; but as a boy, I used to have my doubts as to whether they were happy ever afterwards.

In the year 1834, I was bound apprentice to a London house-decorator in the Westminster Road, nearly opposite to Astley's Amphitheatre, then under the management of the famous Ducrow; and in the practice of my vocation, it not unfrequently happened that I was employed in a theatre, hence my predilection for the amusements thereof.

My first visit to the above establishment was made some years earlier than this. My parents had taken me to witness the Battle of Waterloo.

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The noise and smoke deafened and choked me; but the visit was made memorable by two circumstances. I dropped into the pit a huge piece of currant dumpling, for which I was severely reprimanded; and I saw Gomersal as Napoleon! This gentleman I had many opportunities of seeing subsequently in the same part; indeed, so clearly was he identified with it, that I never remember to have seen him play any other. Figure, gait, and costume combined with more than ordinary talent tended to make the impersonation quite unique. He died at Leeds in 1862, aged seventy-four.

The battle over, and complete suffocation not having supervened, we had the scenes in the circle—Ducrow as the Courier of St Petersburg, with his eight horses; Miss Woolford; Stickney as Shaw the Life Guardsman; and the enjoyable humour of Bullock the clown, a fellow of infinite jest. This part of the entertainment suited my taste far better than gunpowder. But Widdecombe the ring-master, the Widdecombe, must not be forgotten. Picture to yourself a short, stout, swarthy man, clad in the most resplendent uniform, profusely decorated with various orders. His long black hair, well anointed and perfumed, was parted over a low forehead, and hung in ringlets across the broadest and whitest of shirt-collars, open at the throat, and worn *à la* Byron. His eyebrows and moustaches were trimmed to perfection; and his boots, so small and so highly polished, were at once objects of envy and admiration. Mild and unassuming in private life, his natty person was as well known in the streets of Lambeth as is that of John Bright in the House of Commons. He served the various managements at this house for a period of four-and-thirty years, and died in 1854, at the age of sixty-seven.

John G. Cartlitch, the 'original Mazeppa,' was born in Manchester in 1793. Allured by the attractions of the sock and buskin, he took to the stage in early life, and afterwards became known as the principal tragedian in Richardson's show at the various fairs throughout the country. From there he was engaged for Astley's. He was, as stated, the original Mazeppa, and played the part more than fifteen hundred times. He then went to America; and after many vicissitudes both as manager and actor, he settled down in Philadelphia as the keeper of a café in Fourth Street; there he died as lately as December 1875, aged eighty-two.

Cartlitch was not by any means a bad actor, neither was he a very good one. Touching the 'business' of his part he was perfect; but his acting was deficient in light and shade; the glare and noise of the strolling booth seemed to be always clinging to him; yet with his stentorian voice and emphatic gestures he held us in thrall.

Now Palmer, though equally loud-toned—it was a fashion in those days—had greater variety, an easier movement, and could on occasion be pathetic without being maudlin; a fair average actor, of whom we shall see more anon. Mrs Pope, an estimable woman, who afterwards became the

wife of Mr Shepherd, late lessee of the Surrey Theatre, was our leading lady, and played Olinska. A more unsuitable part for this excellent actress could not well have been found. Instead of the lithe youthful figure of the Polish maiden, we had the statuesque and matronly graces of a Hermione. Well grounded in her art, tall and majestic in person, slow and measured in speech, she belonged to the stately school of the Kembles, and at this date was altogether unfitted for the performance of juveniles.

But if my reader will in imagination follow me to the Far East, to the old Garrick Theatre—long since burnt down—I will attempt a portrait of her at her best, at the same time affording a glimpse of some of her coadjutors. The drama is *Rob Roy*, with Charles Freer in the title rôle. As this gentleman has been dead nearly five-and-twenty years, the present generation of playgoers can know nothing of him excepting by report. He was a celebrity in this part of the town for a long period. Industrious, and endowed with fine talents, he soon became an acknowledged favourite; nor was his popularity undeserved. Strongly built, and about the middle height, gifted with a resonant voice—which became somewhat coarse in his latter years, from constant exertion—he was capable of giving full expression to every emotion. If you did not obtain from him that degree of intellectual insight into individual character as exhibited by a Macready or a Vandenhoff, you at least discovered a ready appreciation of the text, coupled with a singular power of illustration. His performance of the Highland outlaw was good and satisfying. Poor Charles Freer outlived his talents and his fame; and increase of years, and consequent loss of power, reduced him to the lowest ebb. On the evening of the 23d of December 1857 he wandered across Westminster Bridge, and entered a small coffee-house situated in a narrow turning at the foot thereof. Having partaken of a scanty meal, he was shown to his room, and was never more seen alive. During the night, while in a fit of temporary insanity, he committed suicide. But the evening I speak of was long before this melancholy period.

Mrs Pope appeared as the wife of the Macgregor, her personality, as described above, eminently qualifying her for the part. Helen does not appear until the third act, when she confronts Thornton and his men in the Pass of Lochard. Her sudden entrance on a point of projecting rock, claymore in hand, to interrogate the Captain, sent a thrill through every vein, and her first words, 'Hold there; stand! Tell me, what seek you in the country of the Macgregor?' roused us to enthusiasm. There was no bravado in her defiance; the brave and injured woman stood there upon her 'native heath,' prepared to do or die. Her deliberate manner and slow utterance served only faintly to conceal the surging passion in her wounded heart. You saw the fierce light of the coming struggle settling on her face, and felt that come what might, she would be equal to either fortune. Anything more august than her bearing after the conflict, I cannot conceive; her eyes sparkled with triumph, and victory seemed to radiate from every limb. Much too elated to be vindictive, I thought I even detected a covert sense of humour in her interview with the Bailie;

but the 'Lament,' heard from afar, struck her dumb for an instant; and before recovery was possible, came the news of her husband's captivity. Now the fire kindled by her wrongs burst into flame, the floodgates of her wrath were burst in her desire for instant vengeance; if smitten, she would return the blow with signal vehemence. The situation here is a fine one, and our actress made the most and best of it; self-contained, there was no ranting, but such an exhibition of suppressed power as is rarely witnessed on the stage nowadays.

The Garrick Theatre was at this period under the management of Conquest and Gomersal—the Gomersal. Conquest being the principal low comedian, was announced to appear as Jerry Sneak in Foote's now almost forgotten farce, *The Mayor of Garrath*. It was a most amusing performance. In 1852, on the death of Rouse, Mr B. O. Conquest became the proprietor of the Grecian Theatre in the City Road, and conducted its affairs with much success until his death in July 1872, at the age of sixty-eight. The evening's entertainments concluded with Howard Payne's drama entitled *Clari, the Maid of Milan*, Freer and Mrs Pope enacting the chief parts. Freer was admirable as Rolamo; but the leading lady failed to convey the remotest idea of the betrayed maiden; she sung the song of 'Home, sweet Home,' plaintively and with expression; nevertheless, the entire assumption was a huge mistake.

Let us now step across the water once more, and take a glance at the dramatic doings on the Surrey side. Can any of my readers call to mind the various excellences of that thoroughly good actor Elton? I dwell upon his histrionic exploits with affectionate remembrance. Though occasionally engaged at the larger houses, his home was on the minor stage, where he was always a welcome favourite. It must, I think, have been about 1834 when I saw him play William Tell at the Victoria before one of the most enthusiastic audiences that ever graced a theatre. Unlike Macready, the original exponent of the part, he was small in person, and not by any means robust, did not, in fact, look the character, as did his friendly rival at Drury Lane; but once engaged upon the scene, the genius of the man magnified the actor, until his proportions seemed to grow almost heroic. A fine elocutionist, endowed with a rich melodious voice, exquisitely modulated, he threw such an amount of patriotic fervour into his declamation, that gratification was imminent, and applause compulsory. The looking-glass curtain and the juggler Ramo Samee, who performed in front of it, were additional attractions.

I next met with Elton at the Rotunda in the Blackfriars Road—rather a notable place in those days—where he was engaged to deliver a course of lectures on Shakspeare's plays with illustrations. These were admirably rendered, and obtained much success. An amateur at this season, and eager and willing to learn, in order that I might plant my foot on the lowest rung of the professional ladder, I profited greatly by his instructions. Only twice subsequently did I have the pleasure of seeing him act, and these performances took place on the Surrey stage. The first occasion was made remarkable by its

being one of the final performances of Dowton, previous to his retirement, a fine old actor of the best school. The play was *Henry IV., Part I.* Dowton enacted Falstaff; Butler, Hotspur; and Elton, Prince Henry; the minor characters being filled by members of the regular working company. Again I saw him in Sheridan Knowles's *John of Procida*, an excellent, but unappreciated tragic drama, without dreaming for a moment that that was to be our last meeting. Full of hope, with good engagements awaiting him, abreast of his highest power, he was justified in anticipating a long and prosperous career in his profession. Elton had been fulfilling an engagement in Edinburgh, on the completion of which he took passage in the steamship *Pegasus*, which plied between Leith and Hull; bad weather ensued, and the vessel was lost, July 18, 1843. He had just completed his forty-ninth year.

In the autumn of 1835, a translation from Scribe's *La Juive*, entitled *The Jewess*, was produced at Drury Lane; and the proprietors of the Victoria, not to be behindhand with their patrons, determined on placing a version of the same piece on their own boards. This was accomplished in the December of the same year; and the result was a succession of crowded houses to witness what was perhaps one of the finest spectacular displays ever exhibited. On this occasion, a remarkable feature was introduced—a raised platform was erected, which encircled the pit; and this was traversed by the procession from one side of the stage round to the other. Nor was good acting wanting. Thomas Archer—the original Gessler in *William Tell*, was the Jew Eleazar; N. T. Hicks appeared as Leopold—his first stepping-stone to popularity; Gann was the Cardinal; and Mrs Selby played Rachel the Jewess. This cast was scarcely inferior in talent to that of Drury Lane.

Consequent on the prosperous issue of this venture, the management wisely resorted to the facile pen of Mr J. T. Haines, who furnished them with an excellent historical drama in *Richard Plantagenet*. In brilliancy of effects, this production successfully vied with its predecessor. We had nobles and knights armed cap-à-pie in complete steel and in coats of mail, with richly caparisoned horses; in short, all the gorgeous paraphernalia of a mediæval pageant. Nor was the attractiveness of this costly display at all diminished by the relative merits of the company engaged. We had Charles Hill, a Surrey favourite; Palmer, from Astley's; Haines, Marshall, and Suter, as principal members; and Miss Richardson, who now became leading lady. Beyond question, the main dramatic interest centres itself in the characteristic portraiture of the insurgent leader Wat Tyler. Haines—of robust habit—invested the part with his own vigorous personality, and made it exceptionally prominent. But indeed the cast all round was equal and efficient; and yet, with all these approved adjuncts, which brought crowded houses nightly, the management failed in recouping themselves, and the theatre closed in the following March.

Mr Haines, the author of *Richard Plantagenet*, was not only a most prolific author, but also a very successful one, some of his productions running for hundreds of nights consecutively;

My Poll and my Partner Joe, for instance. As an actor of certain parts, his talent was conspicuous. He died May 18, 1843, aged forty-five.

VALENTINE STRANGE.

A STORY OF THE PRIMROSE WAY.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER XI.—ARMED AND LIKE A GIANT.

'LIFE,' said Val Strange, repeating the dictum of the dyspeptic philosopher, 'would be tolerable if it were not for its pleasures.' Fully equipped for the slaughter of pike, and intent especially upon the beguiling of one wary monster, Val stood upon the river-brink, and employed all the arts he knew, and employed them all in vain. In the summer-time, a lover of rural scenery in search of placid beauty might have gone further than the spot and fared much worse; but under the gray, cold mist which lay upon it now, it looked not altogether inviting. Reginald Jolly, stamping his half-frozen feet upon a shelf of rock near at hand, and carrying himself as one who is without interest in anything the world can offer, gave a grunt in answer which might have been either affirmative or negative. The speech which followed the grunt set the matter at rest.

'If you class this with life's pleasures,' said the diminutive man sadly, 'I am with you. Let us go home, like reasonable people.'

'I should like to catch that fellow,' said Val wistfully.

'He knows that,' said the little man, 'and in his fishy mind derides you. He is aged, and the years have made him wise.'

'I'll take another cut at him,' Val returned.—'Where are you going? Stop and help to carry him. He weighs half a hundredweight at least.'

'You'll be able to carry all you catch of him,' returned Reginald. 'He scorned the devices of the angler when you were in the cradle. I am going to the mill, to sit by the manager's fire and thaw my bones. When you are tired of luring the ancient Esox of the stream, you'll find me there.'

'I'll come along at once,' said Val reluctantly, 'since you are bent on going.' He got his tackle together whilst the little man executed a grotesque dance with his hands in his pockets; and all things being ready, they marched side by side down stream. After travelling some half-mile through damp and rimy grasses, they came in sight of a raw-looking mass of building on the other side of the river.

'What an ugly thing it is,' said Reginald, nodding at it, 'that paper-mill.'

'Yes,' said Val; 'most things seem to be ugly, if you make money out of them. I mean—that things out of which one makes money are generally ugly. This was my uncle's doing. It spoils the landscape, but it's a valuable property.'

There were two or three barges lying in front of the building, and in one of them a boy was making pretence to do something, conscious of the eye of the proprietor. Val hailed him, and ordered him to bring over a punt. The boy obeyed; and the two friends crossed the stream, and landing, entered the manager's room, where

a cheerful fire blazed on the hearth. The manager was absent; but Val on his own property was of course at home. He stirred the fire, and drawing forward a chair, seated himself.

'Anything to eat and drink?' asked the little man. 'I'm starving.'

'Sherry and sandwiches,' said Val, producing them as he spoke.

Reginald attacked the provender. 'I say, Strange,' he said, arresting a sandwich midway to his mouth, 'you haven't seen my sister, have you?'

'No,' said Val, stirring the fire again, and sitting with the poker in his hand. 'Yes; I have. I met her out riding once, about a fortnight ago, I think.—Why do you ask?'

'I don't know,' returned the little man, with his mouth full. 'I was thinking of her just then. I haven't told you the news yet, I fancy. She's going to be married.'

'Ah!' said Val carelessly. 'And who's the happy man?'

'Who do you think?'

'How should I know?'

'Lumby!'

'Lumby?' said Val. 'They haven't known each other long, have they?'

'Three or four months, perhaps,' said Reginald. 'It's rather sudden; but you never saw a man so gone in all your life.' He laughed, irreverent of the tender passion. 'I like Lumby, though,' he added. 'He's a good fellow, and I suppose he's a good match. If he weren't, pursued the candid youth, 'the governor wouldn't have stood it. She's had lots of chances; but they were all a poverty-stricken lot who came. It's hard lines to be poor when you go into the matrimonial market.—You're not a marrying sort of man, are you, Strange?'

'No,' said Val, toying with the poker still; 'I think not. I don't know. I shall marry some day, I suppose.'

'It's a sort of thing,' said Reginald, with much philosophy, 'that runs in families.'

'Lumby is a good fellow,' said Val, balancing the poker. 'I like Lumby.'

'I suppose he's rich?' inquired Reginald.

'Will be,' answered Val shortly. 'Let's go home.'

'Wait a bit,' returned the other; 'I want to get warm.—What's the matter with you? You look as sulky as the pike which still lies among his reeds.'

'I should have liked to catch that fellow,' said Val, brightening up a little.

'There are two sides to everything,' said the young philosopher. 'He's happier as he is.'

Val threw the poker into the fireplace with a clang. 'Come along!' he cried, rising. 'Let us go home. This place makes me dull, I think.'

Reginald, with some protests, arose; and the two left the mill and struck out afoot across the fields. Val was a little preoccupied, and conversation languished. They came, after a walk of two miles, to Strange's house; and having washed and made some alterations in dress, they went to luncheon.

'It's a rather odd thing,' said Reginald, 'that you and I should have been chums so long, and that you should never have met my people.'

'I don't know,' said Strange, who was unusually depressed. 'I shall see them to-morrow.'

'We shall have quite a houseful,' pursued the other. 'Old Langton's there, and the three girls. Nice girls. I'm in love more or less with all three of 'em; but I can't afford it. Now, you might marry one of 'em, if you liked—you, "with lands in Kent and messages in York," can marry whom you will.'

'Oh,' said Val abstractedly, 'I sha'n't marry.'

'You never,' said Reginald, 'did what you said you would do; and you generally do what you say you won't do. I'll bet all I'm worth, you marry within five years.'—Strange made no response to this challenge.—'Within three years,' pursued the challenger. 'Within two. Come, now!'

'I don't know,' said Val, rousing suddenly, 'that I ought to go to-morrow to your place, Jolly.'

'Why?' asked his companion.

'Henderson has been at me for a week past,' said Val; 'I've seen no accounts for a quarter of a year. They'll take a day or two, and'—

'Pooh!' said Reginald, taking advantage of the pause. 'I've asked you three times. If you don't like to come, say so.'

'Don't like to come?' cried Val, positively flushing in his warmth. 'I'll forgive you that, old man. Never mind. Let business slide for a while. I'll be with you.' After this little burst, he fell again into moodiness; and his companion finding him intractably dull, retired to the billiard-room, and there solaced himself with a book and a cigar. Dinner-time came, and Val was in wild spirits, talking with random brilliance; but in the evening he faded back to his afternoon condition.

'What is the matter with you?' cried his companion at last, throwing away a book, and taking his stand on the hearth-rug.

'I'm hipped,' said Strange. 'If you had come out of that lovely Neapolitan climate into this beastly English winter, you'd feel the same. To think that I might have stayed there, and that I didn't! To think I might go back now, and that I don't! What fools we are, to be sure!'

'Apropos,' said the philosopher with a grin, 'how it soothes a man to speak in the plural number. It's easy to say, "What fools we are;" hard to acknowledge, "What a fool I am." Isn't it, Val?'

'Well,' returned Val, 'what a fool I am.'

'Are you?' asked Reginald, with provoking coolness. It was not to be wondered at that Val at once departed for his bedroom with a mere 'good-night.' His friend looked after him with sly humour in every wrinkle of his comic face. 'I think I can lay my finger on the affected spot,' he mused. 'Here's another man in love. Things are a bit rough with him. Perhaps she's too great a swell—perhaps somebody else is in the way—perhaps she has pronounced the fatal "No." Anyway, he's in love, and unprosperous. He will marry some time. He won't marry. The mere mention of an engagement to be married sets him off, and he spends a whole afternoon and evening in brooding about somebody else's luck and his own ill-fortune. I wonder if ever I shall be taken that way? Oh, my dear young man, if ever you are attacked with that complaint, turn hermit till it's over. For if Strange is laughable, and Lumby comic, think what

you'd be, you bald-headed little beggar—think, and tremble!'

Whatever cause disturbed Val Strange's peace of mind, it was certainly not clear to himself. Perhaps he was merely suffering from the ennui which inevitably results from an aimless life. It is beyond dispute that he was in an abominable temper, and this was all the more remarkable from the ordinary placidity and sweetness of his ways. He threw a boot at his valet, and drove that obsequious friendly attendant from the chamber in bodily fear; then laughed at his own anger, and sat down by the bedside to gnaw his moustache, and think gloomily about nothing in particular.

It was not in the nature of the attack itself, or in the nature of the man affected by it, that this unpleasant mental condition should last long, and in the morning Val descended in his customary spirits. Yesterday's mists had cleared away from the fields as well as from his mind; the wintry air was keen and bracing; the drive, to youth and recovered jollity, a real pleasure. Reginald introduced his friend with all due ceremony.

'Mr Strange,' said Mr Jolly, after the first few commonplaces of conversation had passed, 'I am told that you have quite a wonderful collection of British birds.'

'There's something of the sort at my place, I believe,' said Val.

'I have no doubt that mine is but a poor exhibition after yours; but I should like you to see it.'

'I took them over from the late proprietor,' said Mr Jolly, waving his hand, as they entered a long chamber which contained the collection. 'I think I shall complete the collection, and hand it over to the British Museum or some kindred institution. This, indicating a moth-eaten owl, 'is the renowned'—he fixed his double-glasses, and failing at a casual glance to make out the Latin inscription, bent lower, murmuring—'the renowned—the renowned—in short, a species of bird with which you are no doubt familiar.' The inscription was indecipherable, and Mr Jolly was the least thing in the world embarrassed.

'I am like Hamlet,' said Val; 'I can tell a hawk from a hernshaw when the wind is nor-nor-west.'

'Exactly,' returned Mr Jolly—'exactly.' His manner was a little abstracted.—'Oh, by the way,' he cried, suddenly turning upon his guest with a smile of surprise, 'I fancy, Mr Strange, that you and Gerard Lumby are old friends. Reginald has told me so, if I remember aright.'

'We were at Rugby and Oxford together,' Val answered.

'A charming fellow Lumby,' said Mr Jolly—'a charming fellow. Frank, unaffected, English.' He spoke with an approach to fervour.

'He's a good fellow,' said Strange—'a very good fellow.'

'You moderns,' said the host with great geniality, 'are terrible fellows. I have been young myself; I have heard the chimes at midnight. We thought we travelled at a good pace in those days, but you leave us far behind.'

'How?' inquired Val.

'Every way,' said the genial elder—'every way. You travel like tornadoes. You do everything off the reel, whether you storm a fort, make a

tour round the world, or engage yourselves to be married. Nothing takes so long a time as it used to take.'

'Except dinner,' responded Val.

'Except dinner,' laughed the host. 'Exactly—exactly. In all other matters, you go headlong. Your friend Gerard, for instance, has quite amazed us all.' It was Mr Jolly's constant misfortune that he could not find the *juste milieu*. He was always on this side of the line or the other, and in any mood, transparently unreal.

'What does he want to find out about Gerard?'

Val asked himself. Believing in the extreme subtlety of his own approach, Mr Jolly advanced behind his mask of genial candour.

'He might write like Caesar—"I came, I saw, I overcame." It was very sudden; but when young people are so impetuously resolved, what can old people do but yield. And after all, an honest love-match is the best thing. I don't pretend to have any scorn for money. I could very well have endured to see my daughter married to a wealthy man.'

'Ah!' thought Val to himself, 'he wants to know the true extent of Lumby's fortune. What an ingenuous, artless old file he is!' A smile, quickly suppressed, played on Val's features, and he added aloud: 'People think too much of money in affairs of that sort, nowadays, Mr Jolly. And Lumby has a nice little competence, after all.'

Mr Jolly turned upon him a countenance of swift amazement, and his jaw fell. 'Yes,' he said, tremulously—whilst, in the words of the great soothsayer, 'an ice-taloned pang shot through brain and pericardium'—'a nice little competence.' Would it be necessary to break off the match? A nice little competence merely, was not what he wanted. Was it possible that rumour had deceived him? The Lumbyes kept no style after all, and a mere two thousand a year might keep them going as they were. What if the wealth were all a bubble? It could not be true.

Val, with an inward laugh, came to his relief. 'A very nice little competence indeed.' He could not resist the temptation to a little solemn chaff at this unskilful fisherman's expense. 'Forgive me, Mr Jolly, if I exercise so much freedom as to compliment you upon your generosity and unworldliness. But even in these extravagant days, a young couple may do very well on five-and-twenty thousand a year.'

The unskilful fisherman breathed again; but even now the smile he forced was all awry. 'You are surely jesting, Mr Strange. Five-and-twenty thousand a year is a large fortune. The Lumbyes live as modestly as I do, and I am not a wealthy man.'

'Fact, I assure you,' said Val lightly. 'That's the tune to which old Lumby's annual income may be said to dance in to him. I don't suppose he spends much more than a tenth part of it. He is saving everything for Gerard.'

'You amaze me!' said the disinterested parent. 'I thought,' he added with a touch of emotion, which seemed to him quite proper in the circumstances, 'of nothing but my daughter's happiness.'

'Of course,' said Val, smiling to think of the fright he had given him.

'And after all,' said Mr Jolly, with easy stoicism, 'wealth and happiness are separate

things. Five-and-twenty thousand pounds a year! You amaze me, Mr Strange—you amaze me.'

Mr Jolly had forgotten the collection of British birds by this time; but Val, mischievously feigning an interest in it, went carefully round among the feathered creatures, and examined them with great minuteness, until the joke began to pall, when he released his host, long since weary, but unable gracefully to escape. The room in which the collection was arranged opened upon the garden, and Mr Jolly led the way thither. Strange had not yet encountered Constance a second time; but he saw her now standing at a window which opened flush upon the lawn. Almost for the first time in his life he felt awkward, and his legs and his arms seemed a little in his way. He felt her eyes upon him, and had a ridiculous contest within himself as to whether or not he ought to bow to her, as though he were a schoolboy, or an aspiring shopman whose study of the *Book of Etiquette*—priced at sixpence, and written by a Member of the Aristocracy—had as yet been incomplete. And this was Val Strange, whose eligible bachelorhood had introduced him to rank and beauty half over England, and who was rumoured quite a killing personage among the fair. It was surely somewhat surprising. Constance threw open the window and made way for them to enter.

'My dear,' said her father, 'this is Mr Strange, an old friend of Gerard's.—This is my daughter, Mr Strange.'

Mr Strange bowed, and plunged into small-talk, whereof he was accounted a master. Constance answered with a pleased and pleasing vivacity, and Val's unaccountable awkwardness vanished. The great slow Gerard had none of the polite arts, and no capacity for small-talk in the world. When he had a chance of spending an hour with Constance, he sat and adored; and being adored, young ladies, is dull work in the long-run, let me tell you, unless you adore in return. Then—ah, then!—who shall say how much of heaven's own colour is flashed across the sober gray of common hours! The proverb says that Love begets Love. But that is only true when Love can surround its object with sweet observances, not when it can do nothing but sit and worship with devout eyes and hungry heart in the presence of other people. And since that day when Gerard had pleaded his own cause with such success, he had never seen Constance alone; and even if he had, might scarcely have dared to plead it anew in like manner. And so the influence he had gained, faded, and was lost; and a noticeable thing came out of it, for no influence that ever the world saw set a-rolling yet, stood still before it had set something else in motion. Gerard had broken beyond the magic circle of maidenly reserve, and it was no longer *absolutely* sacred. And beside that was this fact—that Constance, being disposed of in the matrimonial market, and her disposal being known to the world she moved in, was not liable to misconception if she surrendered herself to pleasant human speech with nice people of the sterner sex. She was not leading on Val Strange to a declaration—she had no need to try to lead anybody to a declaration any more. She could be herself, and could lay down her guarding

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weapons of coldness and hauteur and the rest, and no man could come to heart-wreck any more because of her. Observe also, that if all men were to be henceforth accounted safe from her, she also thought herself safe from any assault which Love might make. For was she not engaged to be married to Gerard? And what made the thing safer yet than safety need be, was that Val Strange was Gerard's friend. And again—to heap up reasons—what reasonable young woman thinks that every pleasant man with whom she talks is going to fall in love with her?

On Val's side, love was far enough away to begin with—or at least seemed so. He acknowledged Constance's beauty, as any but a blind man would have been obliged to do. He felt something of the fascination of her manner, but as yet not in an alarming degree. He thought Gerard a man to be congratulated, but not as yet a man to be envied.

Gerard was so near a neighbour, that he came over only as a privileged guest, and stayed his hour or two, and went away again; or made one in a shooting-party, dined afterwards at Mr Jolly's table, and rode home to sleep. Val on the other hand was in the house, and saw much more of Constance than did her accepted lover. She too saw more of him than of Gerard. There was no fancy of unfaithfulness to her mind. Her lover bored her, that was all, and the other man amused and interested her. And so the tragedy began.

One day, Constance and Milly—who by this time were fast friends, and bound in the bonds of an enduring sisterhood, after the manner of young ladies who have known each other intimately for a week or two—rode to the meet to see the hounds throw off. Mr Jolly, who had never jumped a hedge in his life, used to announce with a pensive sigh of regret, that his hunting days were over, and he and Val were escort to the ladies. Gerard was at the meet, but for some reason unknown, forbore to follow the hounds. Strange had taken his place at the side of Constance, Mr Jolly was pompously playing at politeness with Milly, when Gerard rode after them and joined Constance, assuming the position to which his right entitled him. Val fell behind, and on a sudden, black Jealousy rose up in his heart, armed and like a giant. And with that the scales fell from his eyes, and he saw, and trembled at the precipice upon whose edge he stood, the abyss into which that same black giant threatened to toss him. For when Society has done its absolute best with a man, when it has given him a knowledge of the classics and taught him a foreign language or two, and dowered him with social gifts, and has in short polished him, until he scarce knows himself in his new-found brilliance, it has left him at bottom where he was before, and the passions are with him still, eternal and ineradicable. Fear, and Remorse, and Hate, and Rage, and Jealousy, and Love, with all the rest, live on in spite of civilisation, and make life noble as the soul guides them, or make life ignoble as they guide the soul. All human history is built on them, all human life environed with them. They fire the deathless lines of Æschylus, and

sprinkle with dews of Hermon and of Tophet great Shakspeare's page; and with them the masters of fiction still awe and melt us; and the merest yokel who reads the daily papers may see them alive among us to this day.

And with two of that Titanic band it was Val Strange's lot to fight, until he won or fell; for in a battle with the passions there is no drawn-fight possible. Love and Jealousy came out of their hiding-places, and called Honour to the conflict. Lumby was Val's friend; but with Val, friendship was not, as it is with some rare man here and there, a passion. Yet he was fond of Gerard, and would have done much for him. He watched the accepted lover from this time in all his interviews with Constance. He could not doubt the worship in Gerard's eyes; but he saw no responsive glance in the maid's when she looked at her declared wooer. He saw that Constance brightened when she talked with him, that her whole manner was changed and triste when Gerard sat by her.

'It is a mere sale for money,' he cried within himself, raging. 'She does not care for him. If I were free to plead, she might listen. She might learn to love me. She will never care for him.'

Gerard was blind to Constance's weariness in his own presence, and had no jealousy for Val's advances. He was like Othello—once to be in doubt was once to be resolved—and he was himself so loyal-hearted, that by nature he and Suspicion dwelt in opposite camps, and held no communion. And so the tragedy went forward.

A FEW NOTES ON SIBERIA.

PERHAPS the leading idea which the name of Siberia calls up in the popular mind is associated with its unpleasant notoriety as the chief penal settlement of Russia, to which criminals and social and political offenders of every kind are being continually drafted off in hundreds. It is a country about which little was formerly known, and probably that little was sufficient for the demand. In our maps it was conspicuous simply by its blankness; and the public mind, so far as any adequate knowledge of the country went, was as blank as the maps. Indeed, until a comparatively recent period, it may be said to have been an unknown land. Yet, notwithstanding all its physical drawbacks, the country is showing signs of improvement, its valuable produce in minerals and furs being alone sufficient to give it a position of some importance in the commercial world. We take the opportunity, therefore, of the publication of a book on the subject, entitled *Frozen Asia*, by C. H. Eden, F.R.G.S. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), to lay some information on Siberia before our readers.

For present purposes, Siberia may be defined geographically as an immense crescent-shaped tract of country, circling along the northern borders of Asia, and presenting its hollow or concave edge to the Arctic Ocean. So vast a country is far from being uniform in its physical characteristics, the degree of its sterility varying with its latitude and configuration. Its southern margin, adjoining the confines of Turkistan and the Chinese Empire, is in general

well watered and fertile. Farther north are the Mining Districts, and beyond these the Wooded Region, the latter 'unadapted to cultivation, the whole extent being clothed with varieties of pine and fir, amidst whose gloomy forests the fur-bearing animals find a home.' Farthest north of all lies what is called the Tundra, an immense tract of country extending along the shores of the Arctic Ocean for more than three thousand miles, and varying from one hundred and thirty to four hundred and fifty miles in breadth. This is in general a low level plain, destitute of trees, with a dreary uniformity of landscape, its soil to an immense depth frozen hard as iron, which the short summer is only able to thaw to about a foot below the surface. Yet, melancholy as this land is, towards its inner border there are numerous little valleys, which have been described by Seeböhm as 'complete gardens of the most brilliant wild-flowers, swarming with birds by thousands and tens of thousands, enjoying during the summer season a perpetual day.'

As might be inferred from the nature of the country, Siberia is very sparsely populated, there being less than three and a-half millions of inhabitants scattered over a territory of nearly five million square miles. As Mr Eden observes: 'Many third-class English towns contain more inhabitants than a Siberian province, and our great metropolis in itself numbers more souls than the entire length and breadth of Northern Asia.'

Siberia was, so to speak, late in being discovered. It was hardly known to the Russians before the middle of the sixteenth century, since which time, however, they have made repeated incursions upon it, thereby gradually overcoming the native tribes, till now it may be said that the whole is practically under the sway of the Czar. For the purposes of government it has, since 1822, been divided into two immense but unequal portions—Western and Eastern Siberia, each presided over by a Governor-general, and each further divided into districts and provinces, ruled over by officers who receive all orders from their Governor-general, and can only apply to the court of St Petersburg through him. The religion of the people is of a mixed kind, partly that of the Greek Church alternating with a bastard form of Christianity called Shamanism, and partly that of the Buddhists.

The aboriginal or native races of Siberia are split up into several divisions—Voguls, Ostiaks, Buriates, &c., nearly twenty in all, many of them presenting interesting points of study to the ethnologist. They are generally small in stature, with the round broad face and prominent cheek-bones of the Mongols. Their habitations, dress, and manners are of a very rude and primitive type. They seem rarely to build houses, but content themselves with *yurts*, or huts, constructed of a few poles stuck in the ground or the snow, and covered with reindeer skins or birch bark. During the winter the men occupy themselves chiefly in hunting wild animals for the sake of their fur; and when winter is past, leading a life of indolence, lolling about their *yurts* sleeping or smoking, and 'breathing an atmosphere that few European lungs could stand; for clouds of gnats compel them to fill their miserable huts with suffocating

smoke, which in a measure baffles the tormenting insects.' In the matter of dress, the most essential articles are precisely similar both for men and women, and but that the latter cover their faces with a veil, a stranger would find considerable difficulty in distinguishing between the sexes. Their feet and lower limbs are incased in coverings of deer-hide; while the same material, with the fur turned inwards, constitutes the outer garment, which resembles in appearance the French blouse, sewn together in a sack-like form, having an opening to put the head through, and furnished with sleeves. A pair of gloves, with the hair outside, and a hood to cover the head and neck, complete their equipment. Their garments are well adapted to the rigorous climate in which they live, and are so constructed as to form little or no impediment to free action in their chief occupation, which is hunting.

Many of the habits and customs of these people are very singular. Along with much rudeness and simplicity, they have a high degree of ingenuity. At night, for instance, an Ostiak can tell the time very accurately by judging the position of the Great Bear; and as this constellation is constantly varying with the season, the operation involves on the part of the Ostiak a calculation of some magnitude. In common with all barbarous and semi-barbarous races, they manifest great dexterity in the use of weapons. In shooting small animals such as squirrels, hares, &c., for the sake of their fur, care is taken that the animal shall be struck on the head only; and in this the natives seldom fail, even though their rifles are very clumsy in construction. With the bow and arrow, which is the weapon most in use, they are equally dexterous. Their method of capturing salmon, as described by a Cossack officer who witnessed it, is peculiar. In marching through the country at the head of a detachment, he encamped one evening on the banks of a river; and on the following morning he observed one of the natives walk to a pool near at hand, into which he waded, and then stood motionless as a statue, his spear poised aloft, and his keen eyes fixed on the water before him. Not a movement indicated that life inhabited the figure, until, with lightning rapidity, the spear was launched forward, and as quickly withdrawn, a fine salmon quivering on its barbed point. Three times in twenty minutes was this operation performed, and each time a fish rewarded the native's skill. And yet their cleverness is but slightly applied to the arts of life. The Tunguses, for instance, use bear and reindeer skins to form their beds; but as they have never discovered the art of tanning, these articles when not in use are buried beneath the snow, by which means the hair is prevented from falling off. This same tribe, too, are remarkably improvident; they will consume nearly a week's provisions in one night, and go hungry the remaining six days. Over against this, however, must be placed their detestation of robbery, which is regarded by them as an unpardonable sin.

Among the Buriates, another tribe, a ceremony is used for the detection of theft which has a strong family likeness to some of the methods at one time in vogue in this country for the detection of witchcraft. 'When a robbery has taken place,' says Mr Eden, 'and a shaman (or sorcerer) is called in to discover the guilty person, he places

his drum and dress before the burning embers of a fire; and the suspected individual is placed near these garments, facing the sun, in which position he invokes most dreadful anathemas on his own head if he is guilty. The sorcerer, who has been eyeing him closely, now advances and throws butter upon the embers; whereupon the accused steps over the drum and dress, swallows some of the smoke thrown up by the butter, and looking up at the sun, expresses a hope that the great luminary will deprive him of both light and heat if he has sworn falsely. After this, he is required to bite the head of a bear, a liberty which the animal will suffer patiently if the accused is innocent; but if forsworn, Bruin will return the compliment with compound interest. The narrator adds, what is quite to be expected, that 'the Buriates, even when conscious of their rectitude, are much averse to this ceremony, not entertaining the shaman's high ideas respecting a bear's power of always discriminating aright between guilt and innocence.'

Many odd superstitions exist among the various tribes. When a Gilak dies, and is buried, a small wooden house is erected over his ashes by his sorrowing relatives; and as they believe that the soul after death takes up its abode in the body of a favourite dog, that unhappy animal is sacrificed at the grave of his late master, after having been fattened for the occasion. Again, a Gilak will feel himself dreadfully aggrieved if you ask permission to light your pipe at his fire, fully believing that a single spark taken from his habitation will occasion some great disaster, such as the death of a near friend, or a total failure in fishing and hunting. The reindeer holds a deservedly prominent place in the esteem and affections of the Siberians. Some tribes, although they have large herds of reindeer, betray the greatest aversion to kill these animals for food, subsisting almost entirely on the bodies of the game which they take for the sake of their fur. Unless a family is very rich, its members never think of slaughtering a reindeer until they have been eight days without food. This half-superstitious reverence for the reindeer assumes an odd form among the Koriaks and Tschuktschis. 'They will sell a traveller as many dead animals as he likes to buy; but neither love, money—no, nor brandy—will induce them to part with a single deer as long as life remains in his body. Offer them five hundred pounds of tobacco for a live reindeer, and they will refuse it; let them turn it into venison, and the carcase is yours for a string of glass beads. During the two years and a half that the members of the Russo-American Telegraph Company were scattered over Siberia, not one of their parties succeeded in purchasing a single living reindeer from either the Koriaks or Tschuktschis, notwithstanding the enormous prices in tobacco, copper kettles, &c., which they offered for what, to them, was an absolute necessity.' They were indebted to the Tungooses for such deer as they obtained.

The same tribe of Koriaks here referred to have another peculiarity which they evince very strongly—namely, a conviction that all men are equal—refusing to show personal respect to any individual, however exalted his rank. An amusing instance of this democratic feeling is narrated in connection with a Russian major, who wished

to get what he wanted from the natives by impressing them with a proper sense of his rank and power. For this purpose, he called one of the oldest and most influential of them one day, and proceeded to tell him, through an interpreter, how rich he was, what rank he held, what immense resources in the way of rewards and punishments he possessed, and how becoming it was that poor wandering heathen should treat him with reverence and veneration. The old Koriak, squatting on his heels, listened to this enumeration of the officer's attributes without moving a muscle of his face; but finally, when the interpreter had finished, he rose slowly, walked up to the major with imperturbable gravity, and with the most benignant and patronising condescension, patted him softly on the head. 'The major turned red, and broke out into a laugh; but he never tried again to overawe a Koriak.'

But these native races, with all their oddities of thought and habit, their curious customs of marriage, death, and burial, are a decaying people. Mr Eden is of opinion that although, upon the whole, they have been benefited by their subjugation to Russia, yet the latter has among other things introduced disease and brandy, which between them are doing much mischief. The tribal wars are now, however, at an end, and the various races are free to turn their attention to the arts of peace. 'Still they are dwindling away; broad though that inhospitable area of steppe and tundra may be, it is too circumscribed for the conquerors and the conquered to dwell side by side. Years may elapse before it comes to pass, but the aboriginal races of Siberia are doomed ultimately to perish.'

The country is very rich in minerals, and in these and furs the chief commerce is done. In the south-western districts, adjoining Russia, iron-foundries have been worked for two hundred years, though the most of the manufactures have sprung into existence but recently. At Neviansk, in the Ural, very good bar-iron is produced, which, when manufactured into domestic utensils, finds its way to every part of Siberia. The clumsy rifles we have before alluded to, are made at this place also, these weapons costing only a guinea and a-half, but said, as regards accuracy, to bear comparison with the masterpieces of English makers. In other districts there are copper and iron works, copper mines producing malachite, as also valuable deposits of platinum. The government works at Barantchinsk turn out shot and shell; and at Kamensk, ordnance of very heavy calibre is manufactured. On the Kirghiz steppes, nitre is abundantly found, and is utilised in the production of the coarse gunpowder used by the natives. In the Ural, there are quarries of porphyry, jasper, and agate, which are worked into stupendous columns by machinery of the most ingenious description. 'The labour required to cut out a solid column is enormous, and the workmen have recourse to a very clever expedient which lightens their toil. Having selected the portion of jasper that they wish to separate, they proceed to drill holes a few inches apart, along the whole length of the block, to the depth required. When this operation is completed, they drive into the holes thoroughly dried birch-wood trenails, on which they then pour a quantity of water.

This the thirsty wood soaks up, which causes it to swell; and the lateral strength thus exerted throughout the whole length of the line simultaneously, rives the stubborn rock from its bed, to be lowered down in triumph by its ingenious assailants. The Jasper thus obtained is of a dark-green colour, and the enormous vases sometimes seen of this material are made at Kolyvan. Besides the minerals mentioned, the quarries of Siberia also produce mica and plumbago; and a considerable trade in fossil ivory is conducted at Yakutsk.

For many years the great drawback to Siberian commerce was the absence of communication between Europe and the northern coast of the country. Three large rivers debouch into the Arctic Sea from Siberia—the Obi, the Yenisei, and the Lena; and it was felt that if communication could be had by sea with the mouths of one or other of these rivers, the problem as to Siberian commerce would be solved. Captain Wiggins of Dundee had formed the idea that the thing was practicable; and in the summer of 1874 he successfully tested the correctness of his views, having sailed from Dundee on June 3d, and arrived in the Gulf of Obi on the 5th of August. In the following year, that intrepid explorer Nordenskiöld, similarly took the matter in hand, and succeeded in reaching the mouth of the Yenisei in a Norwegian sloop, ascending the river, and proceeding himself overland to St Petersburg, whilst his vessel returned by sea to Norway. Numerous explorers have followed since then, and the practicability of a route between Europe and the Siberian rivers is fairly established. This was all that seemed wanting to the development of the commerce of Northern Asia; and now that it has been effected, we may anticipate that the splendid mineral produce and costly furs of Siberia will find their way more readily into European markets, and that the Siberians themselves will reap corresponding advantages of a higher kind, by being thus brought more intimately into contact with the great centres of civilisation.

SETTING THE SNARES.

CHAPTER I.

At a retired village in Surrey, there lived, some twelve or fourteen years ago, Mrs Francis Richmond, a widow lady, with her family, consisting of two boys and two girls. The boys were the eldest and the youngest of these; Arthur, the senior, being a fine lad of some seventeen years of age; high-spirited and truthful, as boys should be, but never exercising his spirit, as do too many boys, in thwarting or opposing his mother's wishes. That Mrs Richmond was intensely fond of him, may be taken for granted; and there was every excuse for her doting on the candid, bright-eyed, active lad, who grew every day more and more like his dead father.

The village in which they lived, although within twenty miles of the Metropolis, was so quiet, and its population so limited, that when Arthur had finished his education at an excellent school in the neighbourhood, she feared she should be obliged to part with him and let him go to London. For Mrs Richmond's income was a small one, barely large enough to keep them all

in the plainest respectability; while, to give Arthur his education, the widow had been obliged to trench seriously on the limited fund which her husband, Mr Francis Richmond, had left her. Fortunately, however, a gentleman residing in the nearest town took notice of, and a liking to Arthur; made inquiries about the family; and finally waited upon the widow and offered to take the boy into his office without a premium. This gentleman, a Mr Rodpole, was the chief architect and surveyor of that district, while his office was, for a long-striding youth like Arthur, within walking distance, so that he could go and come every day. It need hardly be told how thankfully the offer was accepted. Arthur went at once; his conduct was all that was expected of him; and at the opening of our story he had been at his profession about a year, was now nearly nineteen, and was making rapid progress.

Mrs Richmond was happier than she had been for years; the dread of parting with her idolised son was removed; she was proud to hear of his advancement, and no day passed without her gratitude breaking forth into thanks, when she remembered that now they need never separate. Every alternate Saturday it was Arthur's privilege to remain at home all day. The office closed at one; and Mr Rodpole, who seldom attended on Saturday, allowed his staff, when no special business was on, to take the morning in addition alternately. So, on this bright April morning, Arthur stood with his mother in the little front garden of their cottage, listening to various improvements which Mrs Richmond was suggesting, and which they themselves were to effect; the casual assistance even of a gardener being a thing not to be thought of by the family. As they were so engaged, the village postman came up. His calls at the cottage were so rare, that they scarcely glanced at him; but the next moment he opened the wicket, and holding out a letter for Mrs Richmond, gave the packet, and trudged off.

'Why, who can this be from?' exclaimed the lady. 'I don't know the writing. And what a curious stamp!'

'It is from America,' said Arthur—'from the United States. Let us go in and see what it is about.'

'I do not know any one there,' said Mrs Richmond, complying with the request of her son; and then seating herself in the little front parlour, she opened the letter. 'It is such curious writing,' she continued; 'and the blue paper so dazzles my eyes, that I can scarcely make it out. You had better read it, Arthur. But first tell me who it is from.'

She handed the epistle to her son, who, glancing at the signature, exclaimed: 'From Absalom Holt. Who is he?'

'Oh, I have heard of him,' returned Mrs Richmond; 'but not for many years. He is a connection by marriage of your dear father's. What can he have to say?'

'Well, I will tell you, mother,' responded Arthur; 'I will read the letter, and settle our doubts. Now, here it is.'

"Holt's Rancho" —

'Holt's what?' interposed the lady.

"Holt's Rancho," repeated Arthur. 'I don't

know what that means. It is the name of a place, I suppose. But let us go on.

"HOLT'S RANCHE, ANDREW JACKSON CITY,
COLORADO, March —, 18—.

"MY DEAR MADAM RICHMOND—I expect that so many changes have eventuated since I wrote to you or your husband, who is now dead, that you will scarcely remember my name. But I married Francis Richmond's sister, who proved a good wife, but who is now also dead. She spoke so well of her brother, which was natural, and of his wife, which I reckon is not so common, that I have a kinder taken a fancy to you and your family. So, as I am getting in years, and am lonely, the relative who has been located here having left me, I write to ask your boy to come out; I believe your eldest is a boy. I am considerable prosperous, and will refer you to the firm of Swope, Jerabody, & Co., of 4 Magwen Court, in the City of London, for guarantees. If you conclude to send the youth out, the firm just named are authorised to hand you the sum of one thousand dollars, or its equivalent in English money, for his expenses. I should wish him to come out as soon as possible, as it will be dull in the fall, with no one around. There is splendid buffalo and antelope shooting here; while the creek which runs through the ranche has the finest trout in the territory. I do not make big promises; but if the boy comes, and behaves well, he shall have the best ranche in the western territories, and some dollars besides. Please write at once in reply.—I am, Madam, yours truly,
ABSALOM HOLT."

At the conclusion, Arthur drew a long breath and looked at his mother, who had turned very pale during the reading; then said: 'I—I wonder what sort of a place his farm is! Ranche means a farm. Don't you think so, mother?'

'I am sorry this letter ever came,' returned the poor lady, putting her handkerchief to her eyes for a moment. 'I had a presentiment it was for no good, directly I saw it in the post-man's hands.'

'But, dear mother, you need not distress yourself about it,' said Arthur, rising, and putting his arm tenderly round his mother's neck. 'We need take no notice of it.'

'Ah! my dear,' replied Mrs Richmond, 'I feel—I am sure we shall take some notice of it. I feel, and am sure that you will go to that dreadful place. But first we will speak to Mr Rodpole; he will perhaps tell us what we ought to do.—You would not like to be a farmer; would you, Arthur?'

Arthur tried to answer his mother in the most comforting manner possible, but he was unable to say he would not like to be a farmer; he had thought very little of such a mode of life, previously; but the visions of antelopes and buffaloes—real buffaloes!—the shooting, and the trout in the creek, were exercising a fascinating influence over him.

Mr Rodpole was consulted; and this gentleman was struck with admiration at the opening it presented for the boy. He only wished, he said, that some one would write with such an offer for the whole of his tribe. He had ten sons and daughters; they should pack, every

Jack and Jill among them. This was very different from the opinion Mrs Richmond had hoped to hear, and she was proportionally disheartened by the interview. It was even worse when Mr Rodpole returned from Messrs Swope, Jerabody, & Co., to whose office he went the very next day, paying a special visit to London for that purpose. He came on to the cottage, delighted; congratulated Arthur, congratulated his mother, again regretted that it was not his own case, and said that the firm in Magwen Court gave Mr Holt the highest character. One of the partners, whom Mr Rodpole saw, had just returned from the West, and reported that Mr Holt was the wealthiest proprietor in his district; that he was highly respected; and as for cashing his draft for a thousand dollars—their New York branch would gladly do it for twenty times the sum!

This favourable report naturally increased the excitement in Arthur to fever-heat; and while he might have hesitated, by himself, to press forward a change which evidently gave his mother pain, yet the energy of a stranger in the matter was irresistible. Supported by Mr Rodpole, Arthur could urge his wishes; and poor Mrs Richmond, dreading lest she was selfishly opposing that which would benefit her son, only feebly resisted their arguments. So a letter of acceptance was written; the draft was paid; Arthur's passage was taken by the Cunard steamer *Celebes*; his outfit bought, including an excellent gun; and the day of his departure arrived.

Mrs Richmond went to Liverpool with her boy, who was—as any boy would be—buoyed up with visions, so splendid and so delightfully impossible, that he formed a marked contrast to his mother, whose power to call up such phantasies had long since faded from her mind. But one vision constantly recurred, one promise he continually made, which was, that directly he began to be a farmer and understood how to make money, the first thing to be done was to send over for his mother, for Grace, for Alice, and for Gus, his young brother. Of all the pictures which moved so brightly before his eyes, this was the brightest and best; and this was the last one he uttered as he kissed his mother's tears away for the last time, ere she left the huge ship for the satellite which took her back to the shore.

The incidents of a voyage from Liverpool to New York have been told too often to allow of their possessing the slightest claim to novelty, especially when no wreck, fire, or even hurricane has to be detailed. The *Celebes* happily escaped these exciting but dangerous incidents, and made her voyage in good time; and when at length the vessel was fairly in harbour, the tender alongside to receive luggage and take passengers on shore, and the hasty friendships of a week were dissolving like melting wax, Arthur, who knew that no one was likely to come to New York to meet him, was growing lonely, as one after another of his late companions passed him with just a slight nod of recognition and farewell. He did not know where to go; he could see already that there would be no lack of choice, but the difficulty was, where to make that choice. He was about to descend the gang-

way to the tender, whither most of his fellow-passengers had already preceded him, when a voice said: 'What hotel are you going to, sir?—Excuse my asking the question, but you seem alone, as I am.'

Arthur turned, and saw a dark young man, some few years older than himself, about whose clothes, hat, hair, and beard there was a certain unmistakable cut and style, which he had already learned to recognise as American. 'I do not remember to have seen you during the voyage,' said Arthur. 'Have you been ill all the time?' They had descended the gangway while speaking, and now stood on the deck of the tender.

'Ha! ha! that is a good idea,' said the stranger. 'No; I have not been a passenger by the old *Celebes*. I arrived in New York this morning, to meet an elderly relative who was coming in her, I thought; but I have had my trouble for nothing. My own home is a long way off, so when I saw you standing alone, and—as I fancied—undecided, I took the liberty of speaking to you. I ought to apologise'—

'O no! far from that!' exclaimed Arthur. 'I am very glad you did speak; for I was making up my mind as to whom I should apply for information.'

'Well,' continued the stranger, 'if you have no better recommendation, I will tell you that I am advised to try the *Amsleigh House*, in Broadway. Cheap—which will suit me, for I am not rich—and quiet.'

'The *Amsleigh House* it shall be,' replied Arthur; 'for I am not rich either. However, I shall only stay a day or two in New York, as I am going on to Colorado.'

'Colorado!—that is a long ride,' exclaimed the other. 'I have often thought I should like to go there; some day, perhaps I may. Well, here we are ashore. I will see after your baggage, if you will allow me. But first let me introduce myself. Here is my card.'

Arthur took the card handed to him, and read. 'MR PHILIP G. A. BELLAR.'—'I am sorry to say, Mr Bellar,' he returned, with a little flush, 'that I have no card; but my name is Arthur Richmond; I come from London, and am going to Andrew Jackson City, in Colorado'—

'No more, my dear sir; such an explanation was not needed,' interrupted his new friend. 'It was only I, who have in a sense thrust myself upon you, that required credentials. But do you wait here, and I will see the baggage through the customs.'

He was as good as his word; he 'cleared' the luggage, a process the anticipation of which had been worrying Arthur for days past; engaged a vehicle to take it to the *Amsleigh House*; then suggested that it would be pleasanter to walk on to the Broadway, than to take a 'hack'; and Arthur could not sufficiently thank his good fortune for throwing such a cheerful and useful companion in his way.

The *Amsleigh House* was all which Mr Bellar had described it; the bedrooms were rather bare, but scrupulously clean and comfortable; the bill of fare was amazingly profuse; and Arthur felt himself thoroughly at home by the time he had been there half an hour. Looking down the paper, Bellar pitched upon one or two entertainments, which he said promised to be very good,

and asked Arthur to accompany him to see one that night; but the latter felt tired, and preferred to read in the saloon and retire early. Bellar did not attempt to dissuade him, but laughingly rallied the youth upon his exemplary old English habit—as he supposed it was—of going to bed early. As for himself, he would take a run for an hour or two; and on the next day he would show Mr Richmond the Central Park, the great avenues, and all the wonders around New York. Arthur thanked him in the same strain; and after tea—'supper,' Mr Bellar called it—they parted, each seeming well pleased with his new acquaintance. Arthur resumed his paper, while Bellar sallied forth to enjoy his evening stroll.

ODD NOTICES.

IN his interesting work on the Newspaper Press, Mr Grant, speaking of the hard work which the editor of an important paper has to encounter in the accomplishment of his daily task, says nothing is more trying to the patience and temper than the tiresome and unprofitable visits of certain political personages, who think themselves and their communications of the most vital importance, and who never think of the preciousness of the editor's time. Not only the newspaper editor of to-day, but the studious of all ages, have thought with Lord Bacon that 'friends are robbers of our time,' and have attempted to act up to Shakspeare's advice, 'Ever hold time too precious to be spent with babblers.' Pope draws a vivid picture of the annoyance to which he was subjected by poetasters requesting an opinion on their sorry productions. He cries to his servant:

Shut, shut the door, good John; fatigued, I said.
Tie up the knocker; say I'm sick—I'm dead!
The Dog-star rages; nay, 'tis past a doubt
All Bedlam or Parnassus is let out.
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.

While some have shown in their writings their dislike at being disturbed by inopportune callers, with nothing to say worth listening to, others have attempted to prevent the annoyance altogether by means of menacing inscriptions over their study-doors.

Zachary Ursinus, a Professor in the University of Heidelberg in the sixteenth century, to prevent interruption during his studies, placed over his study-door a Latin inscription, which translated runs: 'Friend, whoever thou art that comest hither, either briefly despatch thy business, or begone.' Justus Scaliger, Professor of Polite Literature at Leyden, and the creator of chronological science, entered into many angry controversies with his contemporaries, yet he gave a gentle hint to intending visitors that they might retire at the last moment without crossing lances with him. The entrance to his study bore the following inscription: 'Tempus meum est ager meus,' which translated means that my time is my estate.

Dr Cotton Mather, of Boston, United States, the founder of a Society of Peacemakers—similar to the Quakers—whose objects were to settle differences and prevent lawsuits, was a man of such great activity and despatch in his numerous

affairs, that Dr Johnson's words, 'Panting Time toiled after him in vain,' might appropriately have been applied to him. To impress on his numerous law-avoiding and peace-seeking clients the necessity of remembering the passage of 'the inaudible and noiseless foot of Time,' and to save himself the tedium of listening to interminable stories of all sorts of wrongs, real or imaginary, he had written over the door of his sanctum in prominent letters the pungent words: 'Be short.'

Probably the student of Harvard University was endeavouring to improve on Dr Mather's inscription by specifying more exactly the brevity desired in his friends' visits, when he affixed this announcement to his door: 'Notice—Hours for Visitors, 7 to 7.45.' Whether this period consisted only of forty-five minutes, in the morning or evening, cannot be discovered from the more than ambiguous inscription itself. And if the 'hours' actually set apart for the entertainment of his fellow-students were from 7 A.M. to 7.45 P.M., or *vice versa*, then we are afraid that young man would find himself 'plucked' at the first 'little go' that took place. We cannot help thinking this must have been the promising student of whom the story is told, that he bought a dozen towels, and writing his name on number one, put Ditto on each of the others.

Those who indulge in legends over their door lintels, however simple, do not always get all the say to themselves. That arch-trickster, Theodore Hook, addressed the following lines 'To Mr Blank, who puts over his door "Pen and Quill Manufacturer :"'

You put above your door and in your bills,
You're manufacturer of pens and quills;
And for the first, you well may feel a pride;
Your pens are better far than most I've tried;
But for the quills, your words are somewhat loose;
Who manufactures quills must be a Goose!

While some scholars are accustomed to bury themselves so deeply in their studies, that the entrance of a visitor causes annoying mental perturbation, and have in self-defence found it necessary to adopt the deterrent expedient we have been illustrating, every individual, we think, desires immunity from such persistent callers as tramps and beggars. The brass plate of a teacher of the French language in Glasgow, in addition to the information such 'brasses' are meant to convey, forbids beggars and old-clothes dealers to ring the bell.

A gentleman near Winchester made a rockery in front of his house, in which he planted some beautiful ferns, and having put up the following notice, found it more efficient and less expensive than spring-guns or man-traps. The fear-inspiring inscription was: 'Beggars beware; Scolopendriums and Polydriums are set here.'

The wall of a gentleman's house near Edinburgh some years since exhibited a board on which was painted a threat quite as difficult for the trespasser to understand as the preceding: 'Any person entering these inclosures will be shot and prosecuted.'

An eccentric old gentleman placed in a field on his estate a board with the following generous offer painted thereon: 'I will give this field to any man who is contented.' It was not long

before he had an applicant. 'Well, my man, are you a contented fellow?'—'Yes, sir, very.'—'Then why do you want my field?' The applicant did not wait to reply.

The following lines are engraved on a stone tablet at the entrance to a certain summer-house, and surrounded by a border of spiders, beetles, earwigs, and centipedes, and other natives of these cool grots:

Stranger, or Friend, whatever name accord
With Timkin's hearty shake or civil word;
Enter, where interlacing boughs have made
O'er latticed trellis-work a verdant shade.
Here seat thyself on benches greenly damp,
Fraught with lumbago sweet, and cooling cramp;
Here rest thy back against this wall of brick;
Perhaps the recent whitewash will not stick.
Here view the snail, his lodging on his back,
Mark on the table's length his silvery track.
Here, when your hat and cane are laid aside,
The caterpillar from the leaf shall glide,
And, like a wearied pilgrim, faint and late,
Crawl slowly o'er your forehead or your pate.
Here shall the spider weave his web so fine,
And make your ear the period of his line.
Here, should still noon induce the drowsy gape,
A fly shall headlong down your throat escape;
Or should your languid spirits court repose,
Th' officious bee shall cavi at your nose;
While timid beetles from a chink behind,
In your coat-pocket hurried shelter find.—
Oh, thou to whom such summer joys are dear,
And Nature's ways are pleasant—enter here!

The invitation which follows was likelier to have a freer response, than the rather lively one to enter the harbour. The *Weekly Magazine* of 1777 says the lines were inscribed over the door of a house at Bruntstock, remarkable for its hospitality:

Who'er thou art, young, old, or rich, or poor,
Come, gentle stranger, ope this friendly door;
Each social virtue here the mansion fills,
Unknown to vice and all her train of ills;
Content and mirth some pleasure may afford,
And plenty spreads the hospitable board;
Good-humour, too, and wit my tenants are—
Right welcome thou the general treat to share.
Here Youth and Beauty, Age and Wisdom dwell;
Each neighbouring swain my happiness can tell.

A bridge at Denver, Colorado, boasts of a notice which might almost claim the dignity of being ranked as a mathematical proposition. It is to the effect that 'No vehicle drawn by more than one animal is allowed to cross this bridge in opposite directions at the same time.' An equally slipshod specimen of the Queen's English may still be found exhibited as a 'Public Notice' by the South-eastern Railway Company at the Cannon Street Terminus: 'Tickets once nipped and defaced at the barriers, and the passengers admitted to the platform will be delivered up to the Company in the event of the holders subsequently retiring from the platform without travelling, and cannot be recognised for re-admission.' Having been deluded into buying a ticket, the unsuspecting passenger on passing the barrier is 'delivered up' to the Company's 'holder,' who evidently has the privilege of 'retiring from the platform' with his prey 'without travelling.' Detectives may be sent in pursuit of the 'holder,' we presume, by the missing passenger's friends, in spite of the statement that he 'cannot be recognised.'

Seventy years ago, the *Universal Magazine* recorded the fact that the notice 'Reding and

Wrighting taut hear,' appeared over the door of a school in the neighbourhood of Hoxton; and a few years since, the *Leeds Express* contained evidence that the schoolmaster was still abroad. According to that newspaper, two curious documents were to be seen in two different windows in the neighbourhood of Hunslet. The first, in a wretched scribble, is as follows: 'A Da Skool kept hat—plaise, terms 2 and 3 pens per week for reeding and knitting and righting and sowing.' The other, in the window of a shoemaker, is similar to one we have seen in a shop-window in Drury Lane:

A man lives here which don't refuse
To mend old boots, likewise old shoes;
My leather is good, my price is just,
But times are bad—I cannot trust.

Fifty years since, the following doggerel lines were to be seen written over the door of a little alehouse on the road between Sutton and Potton in Bedfordshire:

Butt Beere Sold Hear
by Timothy Dear

Cum tak a mugg of mye trinker cum trink
Thin a ful kart of mye verry stron drink
Harter that trye a cann of my titter cum tatter
And windeup withe mye sivinty tymes weaker thin water.

The native landlord of the hotel at Lahore, in which the following notice to the guests is posted up, is apparently determined to charge for every possible item of expenditure, and to allow no fuss about the payment of what he anticipates his customers will look upon as overcharges: 'Gentleman who come in hotel not say anything about their meals they will be charged for; and if they should say beforehand that they are going out to breakfast or dinner, &c., and if they say that they not have anything to eat, they will be charged, and if not so they will be charged, or unless they bring it to the notice of the manager; and should they want to say anything, they must order the manager for and not any one else; and unless they not bring it to the notice of the manager, they will be charged for the least things according to the hotel rate, and no fuss will be allowed afterwards about it. Should any gentleman take wall-lamps or candle-light from the public rooms, they must pay for it without any dispute its charges. Monthly gentlemen will have to pay my fixed rate made with them at the time, and should they absent day in the month, they will not be allowed to deduct anything out of it, because I take from them less rate than my usual rate of monthly charges.'

We have before us a printed circular, headed 'Invitation of Subscription,' issued by a continental firm, and urging upon postage-stamp collectors the immense advantages of a stamp-journal published by the said firm. It is, says the notice, 'the only stamp-paper in all the world that takes care to publish regularly the commercial accounts of principal centres of stamps trade; besides which with this year the direction intending to satisfy evermore its readers, has given earnest to same new correspondents at London and Paris.' Over and above 'autentic accounts' of certain society proceedings, the paper promises various new features. Among these there is to be—'An apposite riddle'—though what 'riddle'

is meant for we cannot guess—'entitled correspondences is designed to the demands, requests, delucidations, and whatever similar article inspecting stamps that subscribers are in right to insert.' 'The paper,' it is further announced, 'for the modicity of its insertions prices sustain the competition with whatever other paper.' This assertion must be cheering to the postage-stamp collectors who understand it.

AMBER.

THE origin of amber has always been obscured in a more or less deep halo of mystery. Pliny the Naturalist wrote of it under its Greek name *electron*, as the fossil resin of an extinct cone-bearing tree. Although these firs or pines became extinct at a period far anterior to all historical time, it is certain that they lived in a later age and were of a higher organisation than the giant forms of the semi-tropical carboniferous era, which were prototypes of the cypress trees still existing in eastern North America. Professor Zaddach says the amber-producing trees must have grown on green sand-beds of cretaceous soil forming the shores of estuaries where the lower division of the Tertiary accumulated. And it is not only to these prehistoric forests that amber bears witness; for in this resin, fossilised by centuries of time, have been discovered nearly eight hundred different species of insects, mostly now extinct; and many specimens of the flora of that period, embalmed whilst still a living vegetation, which differ entirely from the fossil plants supplied by the brown coal-beds resting immediately above.

On the Prussian coast of the Baltic Sea, mines are now worked to a depth of a hundred feet, where Professor Phillips found in a stratum of dark bituminous wood, forty feet thick, stalactites of amber; and round masses with pyrites and sulphate of iron in the coarse sand beneath. Indeed, the true home of amber is on the borders of that inland sea, the *Oestsee* of the Germanic and Scandinavian nations; and vast quantities are still thrown up in stormy weather, when the restless waves break in foam upon the shore, particularly on the seagirt promontory of Samland. It is found also at Cape Sable, in Maryland; and in insignificant quantities in Siberia and Greenland. In Britain, it is so rare as almost to be unknown, although small pieces have been discovered in the sandy deposit of the London clay at Kensington. But the most beautiful specimens of a varying purple shade have been torn from their far-away home in the classic isle of Sicily.

The first record of this antique treasure is found in the old Homeric poems; we read in the *Odyssey* of amber beads in a necklace of gold brought by a Phœnician merchant to the queen of Syra; and in the description of the palace of Menelaus, the mighty king of Sparta, it is said to shine like the sun or the moon, in its splendour 'of copper, of gold, of amber, and ivory.' The Greek name for amber, *electron*, was occasionally also used in ancient times for a mineral composed of gold and silver, because its pale yellow colour resembled amber. In those old days, amber was in great request for the imitation of precious stones by artificial staining, from its brilliant

lustre, and the ease with which it could be cut and polished. From changes induced by its fossilised condition, amber differs from other resins in respect of its peculiar hardness, and in being less brittle, and of greater electric action. Blazing like a torch when a light is applied, it was peculiarly adapted for use in religious ceremonies; and great quantities have alone been consumed in the unbroken worship of thirteen centuries at Mecca, that holy city of Arabia, which saw the birth of the Prophet, the dawn of the Mohammedan religion. There is a quaint fascination in this ancient town, the cradle of Mussulman traditions, where the 'Beitullah' or House of God stands surrounded by colonnades, to which hundreds of thousands of weary pilgrims annually resort, crossing great sandy deserts, through hardships innumerable, to fulfil the command of the Prophet, that the faithful should stand at least once in their lives before the shrine at Mecca. They are enjoined to walk seven times round, prostrating themselves, and kissing reverently at each turn the great block of black basalt, now fixed in the north-east corner of the massive stone structure called the Kaaba; but at which, in a far different religion, the same strange rites were observed many centuries before the birth of Mohammed.

If we could unweave the tangled web of centuries, we should probably find that the burning of amber was not the least amongst the rites and ceremonies of the past. It was strangely intermingled with the myths and legends of the ancient Greeks, and was largely used in the adornments of their temples, being laid, with other precious things, upon the sacred altars, where all costly gifts were thought acceptable to the gods. It is difficult now to realise the feeling of superstitious veneration with which amber has been regarded through successive civilisations, or the strange fantasies evoked by its mystic properties which transformed it into a passion and a faith. Not only in the luxurious cities of Greece and in Rome, but under the great historic dynasties of China, and amid all the extravagance of oriental splendour, it was esteemed very precious. One of the gates of Thebes, 'the city of the hundred gates,' whose superb ruins, perhaps the most ancient in the world, now lie scattered on both banks of the Nile, was, Herodotus tells us, made of amber. Even in the oldest of known sepulchres, the British barrows, amber beads have been found along with pierced stone axes, arrow-heads, and other buried treasures.

No doubt its value was enhanced by the curious electrical phenomena which it exhibits; for six hundred years before the Christian era, Thales of Miletus noticed that, when rubbed, amber or electron attracted light and dry bodies; in which remote observation lay the foundation of our modern science of electricity. It was believed to bear a charm against disease, and to possess the power of detecting the presence of poison. Pliny remarks upon its wonderful properties, and says: 'True it is that a collar of amber beads worn round the neck of young infants is a singular preservative against secret poison, and a counter-charm to witchcraft and sorceries.' The same authority mentions that the price of a small figure in amber, however diminutive, exceeded that of a healthy living slave. In the reign of Nero, a Roman knight was sent with an

expedition to the shores of the Baltic in search of this foreign treasure; and returned with thirteen thousand pounds of amber for the Emperor, including a single piece which weighed thirteen pounds. The dull barbarians of that northern land, who were stirred to labour for this valued product of their stormy sea, could not comprehend the startling price paid for it, or its use in the great and unfamiliar world beyond the Alps.

The best pieces of amber are now taken in the rough by Armenian merchants to Constantinople, where they are carved and chased and polished by the hand of the engraver, as mouth-pieces for pipes. In the Pipe Bazaar of the great Byzantine edifice—which contains mosques, fountains, and a labyrinth of arched streets, each a separate bazaar—are hidden away amber mouth-pieces of fabulous value, in every shade of colour, lustrous as crystal, and set with diamonds and rubies. Supported by sculptured columns, and decorated with arabesques, this dimly lighted city in the heart of Stamboul is full of marvels and treasures. Through its narrow thoroughfares, camels and carriages and horsemen force their way, amongst a dense throng of people of every nation and type—Turks in muslin turbans, Persians in pyramidal bonnets of Astrakhan fur, Hebrews in yellow coats, with Greeks, Armenians, and running-footmen in gorgeous liveries; and in this shifting crowd are dignitaries of the court, who spend perhaps fifty thousand francs on their pipe collections; and harem-ladies, wrapped in long white veils, who come for gray amber, gold-embroidered bags of musk and sandal-wood, and the sweet-scented gums made by the women of Chio, which are all sold in the Perfumery Bazaar of this great oriental fair.

Thus we find that amber, little esteemed as it is at the present time in Europe, and although no longer the important source of wealth that it once was, still has a place in the luxury and religion of the East; and the dim records of its venerable history furnish us with many picturesque and poetic associations, whether we think of it in its early home amid archaic forests, or, as in classic lore—

The sweet tears shed by fair Heliades—

Apollo's daughters,

When their rash brother down the welkin sped,

Lashing his father's sun-team, and fell dead

In Euxine waters.

SILKWORM-FARMING IN ENGLAND AND NEW ZEALAND.

THOSE who have ever kept silkworms must know the difficulty which is sometimes found in obtaining the mulberry leaves on which they feed. Indeed, sometimes in consequence of bad weather the trees are so behindhand in putting on their leafy garments, that large numbers of worms perish of starvation. This evil can be mitigated by throwing the eggs into a lethargic state by the application of intense cold. In this state the eggs can be kept until the mulberry leaves appear in full vigour.

On the above subject, in connection with eggs received from the antipodes, Captain G. Mason of Yateley, Hants, writes to us as follows:

On the 23d of February 1881, I received one ounce of silkworm eggs from Sydney, *via* San Francisco, the produce of moths on the 3d of December 1880. On the 1st of May, I placed these with ten ounces of eggs laid at Yateley in August 1880, in a refrigerator fed with lumps of ice in the morning, and again in the evening of each day, when required to keep down the temperature at forty to forty-five degrees, and in the last week to fifty degrees, at a cost of three to four shillings per week; and from the 1st of July, at intervals of five days, one-third part of these were moved very gradually to a temperature of from seventy-five to eighty degrees. From the 5th to the 19th, the hatching was perfect; the worms looked strong, and 'roused' well in their changes until the fourth age, when their unequal size gave the first symptom of careless feeding. In the fifth age, the greater number died without sign of any specific disease; yet many of the stronger worms mounted the hurdles well, and formed perfect cocoons. The weight of food given to the worms was very insufficient, although the trees which were stripped yielded an average of thirty-nine pounds of sorted leaf. On the 22d of June, I received a few of the same eggs, laid about the 3d December 1880, in a half-ounce letter from Sydney, which, coming *via* Suez, I did not submit to the refrigerating process; yet, though kept in the same temperature—namely, from seventy to eighty degrees—from the 5th of July, these did not begin to hatch until the 22d of August, the worms coming out so slowly, that all were not hatched on the 20th of October, when, with no prospect of food, I destroyed the remainder. Many formed excellent cocoons.

In 1879 I was led to try the experiment of retarding the hatching of eggs by use of ice, from the success in stocking the rivers of New Zealand and Australia from the ova of fish so treated. In that year all my eggs hatched out perfectly; while in 1880 the hatching stopped after three days from the too sudden rise of temperature and drying of the atmosphere, caused by the careless use of the stove, from which the eggs never recovered vitality.

In tracing the above Australian eggs through their dormant state, it is remarkable that the first lot, coming *via* San Francisco, after passing two months in this climate, and two months in my refrigerator, hatched out in a little over seven months from the time they were laid; while the second lot, having passed about four months at Sydney, coming in mail-bag *via* Suez, and subsequently kept in a high temperature, without any hibernation, did not begin to hatch until nearly nine months, and had not finished in eleven months; so that, with these eggs, artificial hibernation appears to be absolutely necessary to enable us to reap the rich produce of the *Bombyx mori* in six or seven months, which the opposite seasons of our Eastern Colonies would allow for rest; indeed, without this aid, patience would be exhausted and labour unprofitable. Last year, by favour of Messrs Green, I sent about an ounce of eggs in the ice-room of the *Chimborazo* of the Orient line, to the Secretary of the Melbourne Exhibition, for distribution, who kindly acknowledged the receipt in good order; but I have no further report. From past experience,

I have no doubt that the climate and soil of Australia, New Zealand, and Norfolk Island, are well adapted for the production of cocoons or silk; while the temperate climate of England is better suited for sound eggs.

The quality of silk and eggs produced in England from the *Bombyx mori*, fed on the leaf of the *Morus alba*, which grows luxuriantly on any soil (excepting clay or chalk), has been judged 'excellent.' The supply of food is safe in summer; and with the aid of a small wrought-iron stove, hygrometer, thermometer, and the perfect ventilation of the trays which I have adopted in these last two seasons, the worms in the magnanerie are guarded against any damp or sudden chill, which are their most fatal enemies in every stage of their active or dormant life. The weight of produce, whether of cocoons or eggs, from a given measure of waste land, will much depend on the standard of reason and intelligence acquired in our schools by the women and children, to whom this industry is so well adapted.

A Pope's Slow Combustion Stove, fitted with a quick-candle, to avoid smoke in lighting when the atmosphere is heavy, will be found perfect both for radiation and circulation of the air in the magnanerie.

'THE HAVEN WHERE THEY WOULD BE.'

I know a grave,
Half hidden in the sombre yew-trees' shade,
Where sunbeams never play
With golden arrows; only grasses wave
In melancholy rhythm. Let me stay:
Angels have knelt with me when I have prayed.

'Tis nearly Home.
The space of time 'twixt Heaven and the sod
Is not so hard to span.
Life's inner working is as one great theme
Which Death unseals. The noblest thoughts of man
Have much of the divinity of God.

I know a grave,
O'er which no restless mourners weep and wail.
Only an aged form
Doth bend in meek submissiveness, and crave
A rest there too. The grief that like a storm
Still shrieks and raves, but little can avail.

I have no tear.
Those steps that falter in life's beaten track,
Those furrowed, time-worn cheeks,
Those trembling hands which grasp the yew, have here
But little left to prize. True sorrow speaks
In that we would not wish our darlings back.

Are we not glad
That they who in this life did labour well,
Have reached the goal?
We ne'er shall win the Crown by being sad;
There is a Cross to bear, a task for all;
There is a stubbornness of Self to quell.

And griefs are sent
To mellow earth's crude harmonies, and tears
Are rained from weary eyes
To freshen faith that is too often bent;
To water that pure germ whose flower shall rise,
And blossom in God's garden, through all years.

HARRIET KENDALL.

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